

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1003

By Fitzhugh

A RESOLUTION to express support for public education in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents advocates for the highest quality public education for all students and develops and supports school system leaders; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents supports and values an inclusive, safe, and innovative quality public education system that ensures all students can succeed, regardless of their zip code, the color of their skin, their native language, their gender/gender identity, their immigration status, their religion, or their social standing; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents promotes equity and excellence for students, educators, and administrators by implementing continuous improvement and research-supported best practices; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents advocates for policies that address the unique needs of persistently underserved children; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents supports creating stable, equitable, predictable, and adequate funding for schools based on state revenues that will meet the challenges of universal proficiency and provide the funding base needed to support a system that leads to success for all students; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents supports the application of public school accountability systems for all educational institutions receiving local, state, or federal funding, including, but not limited to, virtual schools; charter schools; independent schools; and homeschool placements; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents supports public school choice and charter schools that operate under the governance of local public school boards. There should be a level playing field, including non-discriminatory and unconditional enrollment for all children. Common regulations and accountability should apply to all schools receiving public funding; and

WHEREAS, investing in public education is crucial to ensuring the future health of our economy and our country's global competitiveness. Students must leave their public schools ready for success in our 21st century society and ready to fill current and future jobs. A robust federal investment in education is necessary to equip schools with the resources — personnel, facilities, technology — to position students to acquire the skills and knowledge needed for college and career success; and

WHEREAS, without quality public education, there will exist a great divide between the educated and uneducated, corresponding to the divide between the rich and the poor and the strong and the weak; and

WHEREAS, the existence of a strong, effective system of free public education for all children is essential to our democratic system of government; and

WHEREAS, public schools provide students with broad-based educational opportunities to include learning multiple languages; having exposure to the history, culture, and context of all regions of the world; learning how to collaboratively solve problems and interact with peoples of different cultures and different lands; and developing empathy for human differences, commonalities, backgrounds, and cultures; and

WHEREAS, investing in public education is critical to student health. Public schools serve as a lifeline for children who cannot access health services outside of school. Schools are uniquely positioned to help children and youth acquire life-long, health-promoting knowledge, skills, and behaviors; and

WHEREAS, investment in public education matters. While the federal government contributes, on average, just over 10 percent of a school district's operating budget, these federal funds provide critical support to schools and the neediest students they serve; and

WHEREAS, getting children ready for democracy embraces the notion that, to thrive, this nation must have citizens who are committed to the ideals and work of democracy, equipped to operate in a democracy, and who can find common ground in their differences and respect where common ground is absent; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents advocates for local, state, and federal policy that is committed to supporting and educating the whole child, providing support for academic and non-academic factors, including counseling, extra/co-curricular activities, and mental health supports; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents affirms its commitment to these values and will be steadfast in its efforts to protect students and their families, public schools, and our communities from any policies that would undermine these values; and

WHEREAS, these statements exemplify the importance of enhancing educational opportunities for students; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we commit to prioritize support for strengthening our state's public schools and empowering local education leaders to implement, manage, and lead school districts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.